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## **EXHIBIT**

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## Why the latest sewer hike should worry you

Kyle Whitmire > kwhitmire@al.com

he Jefferson County Commission's vote Tuesday to increase the base sewer user fee by \$5 should make you afraid for the future of the county.

For the average Jefferson County ratepayer, that bump will amount to a 13 percent increase in sewer bills Nov. 1. Perhaps, in the greater scheme of things, five bucks a month doesn't sound like much — a bit more than a cup of froufrou coffee at Starbucks.

No, that's not the frightening thing.

## Reliability

What's really scary is what this says about the reliability of the County Commission's promises, the credibility of its analysts, and the capability of its bankruptcy team.

Last month, commissioners reached an agreement with the county's creditors that would include 7.41 percent increases for the next four years and 3.49 percent

See SEWER, Page 7A

## WHY THE INCREASE?

County officials say there were reasons for the changed rate increase:

- Assumptions about sewer revenue and customer consumption proved to be wrong. Both were down and a supplement was needed to bring the county to what it had promised to creditors as part of their deal.
- County officials blamed a decrease in sewer customer consumption on higherthan-usual rainfall.
- Interest rates on municipal securities have spiked since the county reached its consensus with creditors.